

James Smith
Rep. J. H. Jennings
His Prayer Book

Nov 25 1810.

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THE
WATER OF LIFE:

OR, A
DISCOURSE

SHEWING

The Richness and Glory of the Grace and Spirit of
the Gospel, as set forth in Scripture by this Term,

THE WATER OF LIFE.

BY JOHN BUNYAN.

And whosoever will, let him take of the Water of Life freely,
Rev. xxii. 17.

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James Smith
his Book. 12

THE
EPISTLE
TO THE
READER.

Courteous Reader,

I Have now presented thee with something of a discourse of the water of life and its virtues, therefore thou mayest, if thou wilt, call this Book, Bunyan's Bill of his Master's water of life. True, I have not set forth at large the excellent nature and quality thereof, nor can that SO be done by the pen or tongue of men or angels. Yet this I have said, and so saying, said truly that whosoever shall drink of this water, shall find it in him a well of water; and not only so, but a well springing up in him to everlasting life, let his disease be what it will. And as men in their bills, for conviction to readers, do give an account to the country of the persons cured and the diseases that have been removed by liquors and preparations that have been made for that end, so could I, were it not already * done by an infallible pen to my hand, give you accounts of numberless numbers that have not only been made to live, but to live for ever, by drinking of this water, this pure water of life. Many of them indeed are removed from hence, and live where they cannot

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* By holy writ.

be spoken with as yet, but abundance of them do still remain here, and have their abode yet with men.

Only, if thou would'st drink it, drink it by itself, and that thou mayest not be deceived by that which is counterfeit, know it as it comes from the hand of our Lord without mixture, pure and clear as crystal. I know there are many mountebanks in the world, and every of them pretend they have this water to sell. But my advice is, that thou go directly to the throne * thyself, or as thou art bidden, come to the waters, † and there thou shalt be sure to have that which is right and good, and that which will certainly make thee well, let thy disease or trouble, or pain, or misery be what it will. For the price, care not for that, for enough, this is to be had without money or price, will give, saith God and the Lamb, ‡ to him that thirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that he says again, whosoever will let him take the water freely, so that thou hast no ground to keep thy shame of thy poverty; nay, for the poor it is prepared and let open, to the poor it is offered, the poor body may have it of free cost. §

But let it not be slighted because it is offered to thee upon terms so full, so free. For thou art sick, and sick unto death if thou drinkest not of it, nor is there any other than this that can heal thee, and make thee well. Farewell. The Lord be thy physician.

So prays thy friend,

JOHN BUNYAN.

* Heb. iv. 18. † Isa. lv. 1. Rev. ii. 6. ‡ Rev. xxi.

§ Isa. xli. 17, 18.

OF THE
RIVER OF WATER
OF
L I F E.

REV. xxii. 1.

*And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal,
proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb.*

THESE words are part of that description that *
one of the seven angels, which had the seven
vials full of the seven last plagues, gave unto John of
the New Jerusalem, or of the state of that gospel church
that shall be in the latter days. "Wherefore he saith
and shewed me; HE" the angel shewed me.

In the text we have these things to consider of.

I. The matter, the subject matter of the text, and
what is, the water of life. "He shewed me the water
of life."

II. We have also here the quantity of this water
shewed to him, and that is, under the notion of a river
he shewed me a river of water of life.

III. He shews him also the head, or well-spring
from whence this river of water of life proceeds, and

THE WATER OF LIFE.

that is, "the throne of God, and of the Lamb. "He shewed me a river of water of life, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb."

IV. We have also here the nature and quality of this water, it is pure, it is clear as crystal. "And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb."

We will begin with the first of these, to wit, with the matter, the subject matter of the text, which is, the water of life. These words, (water of life) are metaphorical, or words by which a thing most excellent is presented to and amplified before our faces: and that thing is the spirit of grace, the spirit and grace of God. And the words, "water of life," are words most apt to present it to us by; for what's more free than water, and what more beneficial, and more desirable than life? Therefore, I say it is compared to, or called, the water of life. He shewed me the water of life.

Thus it is the spirit of grace, or the spirit and grace of God, that is here intended. Consider.

First, the spirit of grace is in other places compared to water; and,

Secondly, it is also called the spirit of life. Just as here it is presented unto us, he shewed me the water of life.

1. The spirit of grace is compared to water. + "Who-soever," saith the Lamb, "drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst. But the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." What can here by water be intended, but the spirit of grace, that this poor harlot the woman of Samaria wanted, although she was

ignorant of her want, as also of the excellency thereof? which water also is here said to be such as will spring up in them that have it, as a well into everlasting life.

Again, the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried saying, * "if any man thirst let him come unto me and drink." But of what? why, of his rivers of living waters. But what are they? why, he answers, "This he spake of the spirit, which they that believe in him should receive."

Yea, the prophets and servants of God in the old Testament, did take this water of life for the spirit of grace that should in the latter days be poured out into the church. Hence Isaiah calls water God's spirit and blessing, and Zechariah, the spirit of grace.

† "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground." "I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thy offspring." And Zecharias saith, ‡ "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplication and they shall mourn," &c. Behold, in all these places the spirit of grace is intended, and for our better understanding, it is compared to water, to a well of water, to springs of water, and to floods of water.

2. It is also called the spirit of life.

1. More closely.

2. More openly.

First, more closely, where it is called "living water, and water springing up to everlasting life."§

Secondly, then more openly or expressly, it is called the spirit of life. And after three days and an half, "the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet." ||

* John vii. 37, 38, 39. † Isa. xlv. 3. ‡ Zech. xii. 10.
§ John iv. 10, 11, 14. chap. vii. 38. || Rev. xi. 11.

From hence therefore I conclude, that by these terms, water of life, is meant the spirit of grace, or the spirit and grace of the gospel. And the terms are such as are most apt to set forth the spirit and grace of the gospel by. For

First, by this term Water, an opposition to sin is presented unto us. Sin is compared to water, to deadly waters, and man is said to drink it, as one that drinketh waters. "How much more abominable and filthy is man, who drinketh iniquity like water!" † so then that grace and the spirit of grace is compared to water, it is to shew what an antidote grace is against sin; it is as I may call it, counter-poison to it. It is the only thing by the virtue of which sin can be forgiven, vanquished, and overcome.

Secondly, by this term Water, you have an opposition also to the curse that is due to sin, presented unto you. The curse is compared to water, the remedy is compared to water. "Let the curse come into the bowels of the damned," ‡ saith the Psalmist, like water. The grace of God also, as you see, is compared to water. The curse is burning, water is cooling; the curse doth burn with hell-fire, cooling is by the grace of the holy gospel; but they that over-stand the day of grace, shall not obtain to cool their tongues with so much of this water as will hang on the tip of one's finger.

Thirdly, water is also of a spreading nature, and so is sin; § wherefore sin may, for this, also be compared to water. It overspreads the whole man, and infects every member; it covereth all as doth water. Grace for this cause may be also compared to water, for that it is of a spreading nature, and can, if God

† John xv. 16. ‡ Psal. cix.. 18. § Luke xvi. 24, 25.

will, cover the face of the whole earth; of body and soul.

Fourthly, sin is of a fouling, defiling nature, and grace is of a washing, cleansing nature: therefore grace and the spirit of grace is compared to water. "I will," says God, "sprinkle clean water upon you (my spirit, ver. 27.) and ye shall be clean, and from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you." *

Fifthly, water; the element of water, naturally descends to, and abides in low places, in valleys and places which are undermost; and the grace of God, and the spirit of grace, is of that nature also; the hills and lofty mountains, have not the rivers running over the tops of them: no, though they may run among them:† but they run among the vallies: "and God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble, to the lowly."‡

Sixthly, the grace of God is compared to water, for that it is it which causeth fruitfulness, water causes fruitfulness, want of water is the cause of barrenness, and this is the reason why the whole world is so empty of fruit to God-ward, even because so few of the children of men have the spirit of grace in their hearts. But,

Secondly, as there is a special signification in this term (water,) so there is also in this term (life:) water of life. "He shewed me the water of life." In that therefore there is added to this word (water) that, of (life) it is, in the general, to shew that excellent virtue and operation there is in this water. It is *aqua vitæ*, water of life, or water that hath a health and life in it. And this term shews us.

* Ezek. xxxvi. 25. † Prov. iii. 34. Jam. iv. 6.
‡ 1 Pet. v. 5.

First, "that the world of graceless men are dead:"^{*} dead in trespasses and sins. Dead, that is, without life and motion God-ward in the way of the testament of his Son.

Secondly, it also shews us, "that there is not any thing in the world, or in the doctrine of the world, the law, that can make them live." Life is only in this water, death is in all other things. The law, I say, which is that that would if any thing in the whole world, give life unto the world, but that yet killeth, condemneth, and was added that the offence might abound: wherefore there is no life, either in the world, or in the doctrine of the world: it is only in this water, in this grace of God, which is here called the water of life, or God's *aqua vitæ*.

Thirdly, It is also called the water of life, to shew, "that by the grace of God men may live," how dead soever their sins have made them. When God will say to a sinner, "live;" though he be dead in his sins, "he shall live." "When thou wast in thy blood, I said unto thee, live: yea, when thou wast in thy blood, I said, live" [†] And again, "the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live."[‡]

That is, when he speaks words of grace, and mixeth those words with the spirit and grace of the gospel, then men shall live: for such words, so attended, and such words only, are spirit and life. "The words that I speak unto you," saith Christ, "they are spirit, and they are life."[§]

Fourthly, in that this grace of God is here presented unto us under the terms of water of life, it is to shew, that some are sick of that disease, that nothing can cure

^{*} John v. 21. 25. Eph. ii. 1. Col. ii. xiii.

[†] Ezek. xvi. 8, 9.

[‡] John v. 25.

[§] John vi. 63.

but that. There are many diseases in the world, and there are also remedies for those diseases : but there is a disease that nothing will, can or shall cure, "but a dram of this bottle," a draught of this *aqua vitæ*, this water of life. This is intimated by the invitation : "let him take the water of life freely. And again, "I will give to him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. This is spoken to the sick, to them that are sick of the disease that only Christ as a physician with his water of life, can cure.

But few are sick of this disease, but few know what it is to be made sick of this disease. There is nothing can make sick of this disease, but the law and sin, and nothing can cure but the grace of God by the gospel, called here the water of life.

We come now to discourse of the second thing with which we are presented by the text : and that is, "the quantity that there is, of this water of life." It is a river. "He shewed me a river of the water of life." Waters that are cordial, and that have in them a faculty to give life to them that want it, and to maintain life where it is, are rare, and scarce, and to be found only in close places, and little quantities : but here you see there is abundance, a great deal, a river, a river of water of life. In my handling of this point, I will shew you,

First. "What a river of water of life this is :"

Secondly, "and then draw some inferences therefrom.

1. What a river this is ; this river of water of life.

1. It is a deep river. It is a river that is not shallow, but deep, with an "O the depth ! I will make their waters deep," saith God. And again, "They have drunk of the deep waters." A river of water of life is much ; but a deep river is more. Why, soul sick sinner, sin sick sinner, thou that art sick of that disease that nothing can cure but a portion of this river of the

water of life: here is a river for thee, a deep river for thee. Those that at first are coming to God by Christ for life are of nothing so inquisitive, as of whether there is grace enough in him to save them. But for their comfort, here is abundance, abundance of grace: a river, a deep river of the water of life for them to drink of.

2. As the river is deep, * so it is wide and broad. Wherefore as thou art to know the depth, "that it is deep:" so thou art to know its breadth, that is, "that it is broad."† It is broader than the sea: "a river that cannot be passed over." Never did man yet go from one side of this river to the other, when the waters indeed were risen; "and now they are risen," ever now they proceed out of the throne of God and of the Lamb too. Hence this grace is called the "unsearchable riches of Christ."‡ Sinner, sick-sinner, what sayest thou to this? wouldest thou wade, wouldest thou swim? here thou mayest swim, it is deep, yet fordable at first entrance. And when thou thinkest that thou hast gone thorough and thorough it, yet turn again and try once more, and thou shalt find it deeper than hell, and a river that cannot be passed over. If thou canst swim, here thou mayest rowl up and down, as the fishes do in the sea. Nor needest thou fear drowning in this river: it will bear thee up, and carry thee over the highest hills, as Noah's waters did carry the ark. But,

3. As this river of water of life is deep and large; so it is a river that is full of waters. A river may be deep, and full. A river may be broad and not deep. Ay, but here is a river deep, and broad, and full too. Thou waterest it; thou greatly enrichest it with the

* Eph. iii. 18. † Job xi. 9. ‡ Ezek. xlvii. 7.
Eph. iii. 8.

river deep, and broad, and full too. Thou waterest it; thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God which is full of water. * Full of grace and truth. Fill the water-pots, saith Christ, (up to the brim.) The waters of a full cup the wickedness shall have, and a river full of the water of life, is provided for those who indeed have a desire thereto.

4. As this river is deep, broad, and full, so it still aboundeth with water.† The waters, says the prophet, were risen. Hence the Holy Ghost saith, God causeth the waters to flow; and again, and it shall come to pass in that day (the day of the gospel) that the mountains shall drop with new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord, and shall water the valley of Shittim. When a river flows, it has more water than its banks can bound: it has water. Behold he smote the rock that the waters gushed out, and the stream overflowed.‡

This river of water of life, which is also signified by these waters, is a river that abounds, and that overflows its banks in an infinite and unspeakable mannner. Thus much for the river, to wit, what a river of water of life it is. It is a river deep, broad, full and abounding with this water, with this spirit and grace of the gospel.

Secondly, now I shall come to draw some inferences from it, that is from this term, a river. A river of water of water of life.

First then, a river is water that is common, common in the streams, though otherwise in the head. This river proceeds out of the throne, and so, as to its rise, it is special; it is also called the water of life; and as it is such it is special; but as it is a river, it is common, and for

* Psal. lxvi. 9. † Ezek. xlvii. 5. ‡ Joel iii. 18.

§ Psal. lxxviii. 20.

common use, and for common good. Hence the grace of God is called, the common salvation, * for that by the word there is no restraint, no denial to, or forbidding of any thing that will from receiving thereof.

And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely; † what can more fully declare the commonness of a thing. Yea, this river is called at the very head of it, an "Open Fountain, a fountain opened to the house of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem." ‡ And by Judah and Jerusalem is comprehended every soul that would drink of the water of life, or living water. And hence it is, that this river is said to "go down to the desert and to the sea," § where all kinds of fishes are. By sea is meant the world, and by fish the people, and thither shall run this river of water of life. But,

Secondly, though a river, in the streams of it, is common, yet a river, as it passes, thro' a country or province, will chuse its own way. It will also fetch its compasses and circuits; it will go about and reach hither and thither; and according to its courses, it will miss by its turnings, what places, and people it lifts; yet it is common, for that it lies open; yet it is common for all the beasts of the field. There is therefore a difference to be put betwixt the commonness of a thing and its presence. A thing may be common, yet far enough off of thee. Epsom, Tunbridge waters, and the Bath, may be common, but yet a great way off of some that have need thereof. The same may be said of this river, it is common in the streams, but it runs its own circuit, and keeps its own water courses. "He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills, || indeed he openeth his river in high places, in his throne and of the Lamb, but still they run in the

* Jude iii. † Rev. xxii. 17. ‡ Zech. xiii. 1.

§ Ezek. xlvi. 8. || Psal. civ. 16.

midst of the vallies to water the humble and the lowly. Wherefore they that thirst, and would drink, are bid to come down to the waters; "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy, &c." And again, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."* The waters are common, but you must come to them, to them where they are, or you will be nothing the better for them. Come ye to the waters.

Thirdly, this water of life is called, a river, to intimate to you, "by what store of the same, it is supplied. All rivers have the sea for their original: "All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full: unto the place from whence the rivers came, thither they return again."† And so this river of water of life is said to proceed out of the throne, as out of a place where it breaketh out, but the original is the sea, the ocean of grace, which is in an infinite Deity. "Thou wilt cast all our sins into the depth of the sea,"‡ into the depth of the sea of thy grace. Rivers, when they are broken up, do with their gliding streams carry away a great deal of the filth, which from all parts of the countries thorough which they run, is conveyed into them; and they carry it into the sea, where it is everlastingly swallowed up. And oh! the filth that is cast into this river of God! and oh how many sinners are washed white therein, for by their continual gliding away they carry that filth into the midst of the sea.

A river will take away the very stink of a dead dog, nor doth all the soil and draught that is cast into the rivers, cause that those that can should be afraid to make use thereof; all that have need to betake themselves to this river notwithstanding. But how much more virtue is there in this sweet river of grace that is

* John vii. 37. † Eccles. i. 7. ‡ Mic. vi. 19.

designed, yea opened on purpose to wash away sin and uncleanness in, to carry away all our filth, and to remain as virtuous still.

4. It is called a river, to shew that it yields a continual supply, as I may call it, of new and fresh grace. Rivers yield continually fresh and new water. For though the channel or water-course in which the water runs is the same, yet the waters themselves are always new. That water that but one minute since, stood in this place or that of the river, is now gone, and new and fresh is come in its place. And thus it is with the river of God, which is full of water; it yieldeth continually fresh supplies, fresh and new supplies of grace to those that have business in these waters. And thus it is with the river of God, which is full of water; it yieldeth continually fresh supplies, fresh and new supplies of grace to those that have business in these waters. And this is the reason that when sin is pardoned, it seems as if it "were carried away." Those waters have with their continual streams, carried away the filth of the sinner from before his face. It is not so with ponds, pools, and cisterns; they will often be foul and stink, if they be not often emptied, and filled again with fresh water. We must then put a difference, between the grace that dwelleth in us, and this river of water of life. We are but as ponds, pools, and cisterns that can hold but little, and shall also soon stink notwithstanding the grace of God is in us, if we be not often emptied from vessel to vessel*, and filled with fresh grace from this river. But the river is always sweet, nor can all the filth that is washed out of the world, make it stink or infect it; its water runs, with a continual gliding stream, and so carries away all annoyance, as was said, into the depth of the sea.

* Jer. lxxviii. 14.

5. The grace of God is called a river, to shew, that it is only suited to those who "are capable of living therein." Water, though it is that which every creature desireth, yet it is not an element in which every creature can live. Who is it that would not have the benefit of grace, of a throne of grace? even none but those whose temper and constitution is suited to grace. Hence, as the grace of God is compared to a river; so those that live by grace are compared to FISH, for that, as water is that element in which the Fish liveth; so grace is that which is the life of the saint.* "and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither; for they shall be healed, and every thing shall live whether the river cometh;" art thou a fish, man, art thou a fish? canst thou live in the water? canst thou live always, (and no where else but) in the water? Is grace thy proper element? the fish dieth if she be taken out of the water, unless she be timely put in again: the saint dieth if he be not in this river. Take him from this river and nothing can make him live; let him have water, water of life enough, and nothing can make him die.

I know that there are some things besides fish, that can make a shift to live in the water; but the water is not their proper, their only proper element. The frog can live in the water, but not in the water only. Give some men grace and the world, grace and sin; admit them to make use of their lusts for pleasure, and of grace to remove their guilt, and they will make a pretty good shift, as we say; they will finely scrabble on in a profession; but hold them to grace only, confine their life to the grace, put them into the river, and let them have nothing but river, and they die; the

* Ezek. xlviii. 9.

word and way, and nature of grace, is to them as light bread, and their soul can do nothing but loath it; for they are not suited and tempered for that element. They are fish, not frogs, that can live in the river, as in their only proper element: wherefore the grace of God, and spirit of grace is compared to a river, to shew, that none but those can live thereby, whose souls and spirits are suited and fitted thereto.

6. The grace, and spirit of grace of God is called or compared to a river, to answer those unsatiable desires, and to wash away those mountainous doubts, which attend those that indeed do thirst for that drink. The man that thirsteth with spiritual thirst, fears nothing more than that there is not enough to quench his thirst: all the promises and sayings of God's ministers to such a man, seem but as thimbles instead of bowls.† I mean so long as his thirst: and doubts walk hand in hand together. There is not enough in this promise; I find not enough in that promise to quench the drought of my thirsting soul. He that thirsteth aright, nothing but God can quench his thirst. "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God." Well, what shall be done, for this man? Will his God humour him and answer his desires? Mark what follows, "when the poor and needy seek water, and there is none" (and they can find none, when all the promises seem to be dry, and like clouds that return after the rain) "and their tongue fails for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them." Ay, but, Lord, what wilt thou do to quench their thirst? "I will open the rivers," saith he, "in high places, and fountains in the midst the valleys. I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water." Behold! here are rivers and

† Psal. xlii. 2. lxiii. 1. cxliii. 6.

fountains, a pool, and springs, and all to quench the thirst of them that thirst for God.

Wherefore, as I said, such provision for the thirsty, intimates their fears of want, and the craving appetite of their souls after God. Right spiritual thirst is not to be satisfied without abundance of grace. "And they shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house, and thou shalt make them to drink of the river of thy pleasure?*".

7. The grace of God is compared to a river, to shew the greatness of the family "of God." He has a family, a great family, and therefore it is not a little that must be provided for them. When Israel went out of Egypt, and thirsted by the way, God provided for them a river, he made it gush out of the rock: for alas! what less than a river† could quench the thirst of more than six hundred thousand men, besides women and children?

I say what less than a river could do it? When the people lusted for flesh, Moses said "shall the flocks and herds be slain for them to suffice them, or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them to suffice them?" even so could not less than a river sustain and suffice that great people: now his people in gospel-days are not to be diminished but increased, and if then they had need of a river, surely now of a sea; but the river is deep and broad, full, and abounds, or rises with water, so it will suffice.

8. The grace of God is compared to a river, perhaps to shew of what a low esteem it is with the rich and the full. The destitute indeed embrace the rock instead of a shelter, and the poor and needy, they seek water, but they can drink wine in bowls, that can solace themselves with, as they think, better things,

* Psal. xxxvi. 8.

† Psal. lxxviii. 20.

they come not to this river to drink; they never say, they shall die if they drink not of this water. It is therefore for the poor and needy, God will lead them to his living fountains of waters, and will wipe away all tears from their eyes.* And thus I pass the second, and come to the third particular, and that is to shew the head and spring from whence this river proceeds, or springs.

Rivers have their heads from whence they rise, out of which they spring; and so accordingly we read this river has; wherefore he saith, "he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb."

1. God is here to be taken for the whole Godhead, Father, Son, and Spirit, for that grace proceeds from them all; the grace of the Father, the grace of the Son, and grace of the Spirit is here included. Hence, as the Father is called, "the God of grace;"† so the Son is said to be full of grace, grace to be communicated; and the Holy Ghost is called, "the spirit of grace." So then by this we perceive whence grace comes, Were all the world gracious, if God were not gracious, what was man the better? if the Father or the Son, or the Holy Ghost are gracious, if they were not all gracious, what would it profit? but now God is gracious, the three persons in the God-head are gracious, and so long they that seek grace are provided for; for that there proceeds from them a river, or grace like a flowing stream, indeed the original of grace to sinners is the good will of God? none can imagine how loving God is to sinful man. A little of it is seen, but they that see most, see BUT a little.

* Rev. vii. 17.

† 1 Pet. v. 10. John i. 14. 16.
Heb. x. 29.

But there is added, "and of the Lamb." The Lamb, is, Jesus as sacrificed, Jesus as man, and suffering. Hence you have the Lamb, at the first vision of the Throne set forth unto us, that is, "as slain; † and I beheld, and lo in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain."

Wherefore by this word Lamb, we are to understand, who, or by what means grace doth now run from the throne of God, like a river to the world. It is because of, or through the Lamb. † "We are justified freely by the grace of God, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood. And again, we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the richness of God's grace." §

Nor doth the Lamb of God by becoming a means through death, of the conveyance of grace to us, at all darken the nature or glory of grace, but rather doth set it off the more. For wherein can grace or love more appear, than in his laying down his life for us? I speak now of the grace of the Son. And wherein could the nature and glory of grace of the Father more appear than in giving his Son to death for us, that grace might in a way of justice as well as mercy be bestowed upon the world? wherefore, as he saith, here, that the river of water of life proceedeth from God, so he adds, that the Lamb, because he would have us, while we are entangled and overcome with this river of God's pleasure, not forget what it cost the Lamb of God that this grace might come to us.

For the riches of grace and of wisdom is, that grace comes to us not only by a way of mercy and compas-

† Rev. v. 6.

‡ Rom. iii. 24.

§ Eph. i. 7.

sion, but in the way of justice and equity: but that could be by no other means, but by redeeming blood. Which redeeming blood came not from us, nor yet through our contrivance or advice; wherefore whatever it is to the Lamb, still all is of grace to us. Yea, the the higher, the greater, the richer is grace, by how much more it cost the Father and the Lamb, that we might enjoy it. When a man shall not only design me a purse of gold, but shall venture his life to bring it me, this is grace indeed. But alas! what are a thousand such short comparisons to the unsearchable love of Christ.

The Lamb then is he from whom, by, or through whom the grace of God doth come to us. It proceeds from the throne of God and of the Lamb. And it proceeds from him now as a donator; from him, not only as a means of conveyance, but as one that has power to give grace; power as he is the Son of man. For as the Son of man, he is the Lamb; and as he is the Lamb it cometh from him. "The Son of man had power on earth to forgive sin,"* and that before he had actually paid to God the price of our redemption. But how much more now? Wherefore Paul in his prayer for grace and peace for saints, supplicates both God, and the Lamb. "Grace to you from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ."†

"Proceeding out of the throne." Formerly this river of waters is said to come from under the threshold of the house of the Lord.‡ And it is said again, they shall go out from Jerusalem, that is the church or house of God still. || In that they are said to come out

* Matt. 9. 6. 1 Cor. 1. 3. 2 Cor. 1. 2. Gal. 1. 3.

† Eph. 1. 2. ‡ Ezek. 47. 1. Zeck. 14. 8. Ezek. xlvii. 3, 4.

from under the threshold, it may be to imitate that they ran but low formerly, if compared to what they do now. Which might also be signified by this, 'that they issued out;' that that issues out ordinarily comes forth but slowly. Also the prophet saith, the first time he went through the waters they were but up to the ancles.* But what is ancle deep to that which followeth after? it is said also to come out from Jerusalem, where I perceive, were no great rivers, to intimate that as long as the first priesthood, first temple, and type were in their splendor, only the shadow of heavenly things were in use, and that then grace ran but slowly, nor would run much faster, because Jesus was not yet glorified. For the spirit and abundance of grace was to be given not before, but after his ascension.

Wherefore, now Jesus is ascended; now he is glorified; now grace proceeds "from the throne, not from the threshold of the house. He shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from or out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb. †

The throne] That of which the mercy seat was a type, that which is called the throne of grace. ‡ And it is called the throne of grace even therefore, because it is that from, or out of which proceeds this river of water of life; this overflowing grace of God. Now it may be asked,— "what is the throne of grace?" and I shall answer, "it is the humanity of Christ." He is the throne, he is the Jacob in which God sitteth. And he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house. § The fulness of the Godhead dwells in him bodily; and God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, nor can grace come to men but by Christ, nor can God rest as to our salvation but in him. But because I have spoken of this thing more particularly

* Ezek. xlvii. 3. 4. † Exod. xxv. 17. ‡ Heb. iv. 16.
§ Isa. xxii. 22, 23.

upon that text, (Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, &c. I shall therefore here say no more.

Only methinks it is a glorious title that the Holy Ghost has given to the humanity of Christ, in that he calls it the throne of God; and methinks he gives it the highest preference, in that he saith, out thence proceeds a pure river of water of life: we will a little therefore speak something to this word (the Throne, the Throne of God.)

1. A Throne is the seat of majesty and greatness: it is not for things of an inferior quality to ascend or assume a throne. Now then, since this river of water of life proceeds from the throne, it intimates that in grace and mercy there is great majesty; (for grace, as it proceeds, has a voice from the throne.) And indeed there is nothing in heaven or earth that can so.* AWE the heart, as the grace of God. It is that which makes a man fear, it is that which makes a man tremble, it is that which makes a man bow and bend, and break to pieces.† Nothing has that majesty, and commanding greatness in, and upon the hearts of the sons of men, as has the grace of God.

So that, I say, when he saith, that the river of grace proceeds out of the throne of God; it is to shew us, what a majesty, what a commanding greatness, there is in Grace. The love of Christ constraineth us.

When Moses went up to the mount the first time to receive the law, he did exceedingly fear and quake. Why? because of the fire and smoke, thick darkness and thunder, &c. But when he went up the second time thither, "he made haste and bowed his head towards the earth and worshipped." But why? because it was before proclaimed, that "the Lord was gracious and merciful, long suffering and abundant in

* Hosea iii. 5. † Jer. xxxiii. 9.

goodness and truth : keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, &c.

There is nothing overmastereth the heart like grace, and so obligeth to sincere and unfeigned obedience as that.* “Examine me, O Lord,” said David, “prove me and try my reins and my heart, for thy loving kindness is before my eyes and I have walked in thy truth.” Therefore he saith again, “O Lord our God, how excellent is thy loving kindness in all the earth !” and “that loving kindness is marvellous,” for it has that majesty, and that excellent glory in it, as to command the heart and subdue sin. And therefore grace has given to it the title of sovereignty, or of one that reigns. The throne is called, “the throne of grace,” † that on which it sits and reigns, as well as that from whence it proceeds. “Grace reigns through righteousness to eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.” ‡

Secondly, as a Throne is a seat of majesty and greatness, and so can awe ; so it is the seat of authority and legislative power, and so will awe ; this is confirmed from what was said but now, grace reigns. Wherefore it is expected, that they that hear the word of God’s grace, should submit thereto, and that at their peril. “He that believes not shall be damned,” is a word of power, of law and authority ; and the contemner shall find it so. Grace proceeds from the throne, from the throne of God, and of the Lamb. Wherefore, sinner, here is laid a necessity upon thee, one of the two must be thy lot, either thou must accept of God’s grace, and be content to be saved freely thereby, notwithstanding all thy undeservings, and unworthiness, or else thou must be damned for thy rebellion, and for thy rejecting of this grace. Wherefore consider with thyself, and think what is best to be

* Psal. xxvi. 2, 3. † Heb. iv. 16. ‡ Rom. v. 21.

done. Is it better that thou submit to the grace and mercy of God, and that thou accept of grace to reign for thee, in thee, and over thee, than thou shouldest run the hazard of eternal damnation, because thou wouldest not be saved by grace? consider this I say, for "grace is now in authority, it reigns and proceeds from the THRONE." Now you know, it is dangerous opposing, rejecting, despising or disowning of them in authority: better I speak against twenty, than against one that is in authority. If the wrath of a king, "is as messengers of death;"* if the wrath of the king "is as the roaring of a lion," what is the wrath of God? and you know, to despise grace, to refuse pardon, to be unwilling to be saved from the guilt and punishment due to treasons, the king's way, since that also is the best way, how will that provoke? how hot will that make wrath? but to accept of grace, especially when it is free grace, grace that reigns, grace from the throne; how sweet is it? "His favour is as dew upon the grass."

This therefore calls for thy most grave and sedate thoughts. Thou art in a strait, wilt thou fly before Moses, or with David fall into the hands of the Lord? wilt thou go to hell for sin, or to life by grace? one of the two, as was said afore, must be thy lot; for grace is king, is upon the throne, and will admit of no other way to glory. In and by it thou must stand, if thou hast any hope, or canst at all rejoice in hope of the glory of God.†

Thirdly, as the throne is the seat of majesty and authority, so it is the highest seat of authority. There is none above the throne, there is no appeal from the throne. There are inferior courts of judicature, there are under-governors, and they may sometimes perhaps

* Prov. xvi. 14. chap. xix. 12. † Rom. v. 2.

be faulty; wherefore in some cases an appeal from such may be lawful or permitted; but from the throne none can appeal. "Now grace is upon the throne, reigns upon the throne, proceeds from the throne." A man may appeal from the law to the throne, from Moses to Christ, from him that spake on earth, to him that speaks from heaven, but from heaven to earth, from Christ to Moses, none can appeal. Moses himself has forbid it. For "Moses truly said unto the Fathers, a prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, of your brethern like unto me, him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you, and it shall come to pass, that every soul which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people."*

See here, this NEW prophet judges, in the highest court he is master of grace, the throne by which grace reigns; and even Moses admits, that from himself an appeal may be made to this prophet: yea, he allows that men may flee from himself, to this prophet for refuge: but there must be no appeal from him. Thou must hear him or die. "How shall we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven?"†

This therefore is to be duly weighed, and deeply considered by us. It is not a saint, nor a minister, nor a prophet, nor an angel that speaks, for all these are but servants, but inferiors: no, it is a "voice from the throne," from authority, from the highest authority; it is the Lord from heaven. This grace proceeds from the throne, and therefore men must stand and fall by what shall come from hence. He that comes not hither to drink, shall die thirsty. He that refuses this water now, shall not have so much as will hang upon the tip of his finger (if it would save his soul)

* Acts iii. 22, 23.

† Heb. 12. 25.

hereafter. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation."*

Apostates will therefore from hence find griping pangs and burning coals, for they have turned themselves away from this throne, and from the grace that proceeds therefrom; nor is it to any purpose whatever they plead for themselves. They are fallen from grace, and what can help them? Christ is become of none effect† unto such, whosoever it is that seeks to be justified by the law, "they are fallen from grace."

Fourthly, the throne is the seat of glory (when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him; then he shall sit upon the throne of his glory.) And if the throne of judgment is the seat of glory, much more the throne of grace. We will venture then to say, that the throne of grace is the throne of God's glory, as the throne of judgment will be the throne of Christ's glory, and that grace proceedeth from his throne, that both it and he might have glory, glory in a way of mercy.

1. That it might have glory; therefore has he designed, that grace shall be effectual in, and to the salvation of some; even to the "praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he has made us accepted in his beloved."‡

He has designed, not the glory of man's works, but the glory of his own grace; and therefore has put man's works, as to justification before God, under his feet, and counts them as filthy rags; but has set his grace up above, has made it a king, given it authority to reign, has provided for it a throne, and called that throne the throne of grace, from whence it also proceeds to its own praise and glory, in and by the effec-

* Heb. ii. 3.

† Gal. v. 4.

‡ Eph. i. 5, 6.

tual salvation of those that receive it, and receive it not in vain.

2. As grace is exalted, and made proceed out of the throne to its own praises, to its own glory, so is it also thus exalted and made flow to us like a river, that we should be the praise of the glory of him that hath exalted it. We that receive it, and submit unto the throne whence it proceeds, have thereby "obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, that we should be to the praise of his glory."* So that this throne is a throne of glory. "A glorious high throne from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary;" now what follows from this, but they that accept of this grace, give glory to God, to his grace, and to the word of his grace: such I say, glorify God for his mercy: † they glorify God by their professed subjection to the gospel of Christ, ‡ which is the gospel, or good tidings of the grace of God. § They with Abraham believe and give glory to God, || and with the Gentiles they glorify the word of the Lord.*

But to slight grace, to do despite to the spirit of grace, to prefer our own works to the derogating from grace: what is it but to contemn God? to contemn him when he is on the throne, when he is on the throne of his glory, I say it is to spit in his face even when he commands thee to bow before him, to subject unto him, and to glorify the grace of his glory, that proceeds from the throne of his glory. If men in old time were damned because they glorified him not as God, shall they not be more, than damned; if more than damned can be, who glorify him not for his grace?

* Ephes. i. 11, 12. † Rom. xv. 9. 2. ‡ Cor. 9. 13.
§ Acts xx. 24. || Rom. iv. 20. * Acts. xiii. 48.

and, to be sure, none glorify him for his grace but those that close in therewith, and submit themselves thereto. Talkers of grace are but mockers of God, flatterers of God. Those that only talk highly of grace, and submit not themselves unto it, are but those that praise a look, or flatter him in his own conceits. Grace God has exalted, has set upon the throne, and so made it a king, and given it authority to reign; and thou goest by and hearest thereof, but will not submit thyself thereto, neither thy soul, nor thy life: why, what is this more than to flatter God with thy lips, and then to lie unto him with thy tongue? what is it but to count him less wise than thyself, while he seeks glory by that, by which thou wilt not glorify him; while he displays his grace before thee in the world from the throne, and as thou goest by, with a nod thou callest it fine thing, but followest that which leadeth therefrom? tremble, tremble, ye sinners, that have despised the richness of his goodness. The day is coming when ye shall behold, and wonder, and perish, if grace prevaileth not with you to be content to be saved by it to the praise of its glory*, and to the glory of him who hath set it upon the throne.†

Fifthly, the throne is the seat of wisdom. Hence he is called the ancient of days, that sits on this throne, the throne of God, infinite in wisdom, whose garments were white as snow, and the hair of his head is like the pure wool, his wisdom is set forth unto us. Wherefore when we read that out of the throne proceeds a river of grace, when we read this proceedeth out of the throne of God, it is as much as to say, the wise God, who most perfectly knoweth all ways, counteth in his

* Acts. xiii. 38, 39, 40, 41.

† Dan. vii. 9.

wisdom, that to save men by grace is the best, most safe, and sure way. * Therefore it is of faith that it might be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed. And again forgiveness is according to the riches of his grace, wherein he has abounded towards us, in all wisdom and prudence.† Wherefore to set grace upon the throne, to let grace proceed out of the throne as a river, is by the wise God, the only wise God, counted the best way, the safest way, the way that doth best suit the condition of a sinful man, and that tends most to the utter disappointment of the devil, and death, and hell. Grace can continue to pardon, favour, and save from falls, in falls, out of falls. Grace can comfort, relieve and help those that have hurt themselves. And grace can bring the unworthy to glory. This the law cannot do, this man cannot do. This angels cannot do, this God cannot do, but only by the riches of his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ. Wherefore seeing God has set grace on the throne, and ordered that it should proceed from this throne to the world. Yea, seeing he has made it king, and granted to it, to it only, the authority and sovereignty of saving souls; he has magnified, not only his love, but his wisdom, and his prudence before the sons of men.‡ This then is his great device, the master piece of all his witty inventions; and therefore it is said, as was hinted before in this thing he hath proceeded towards us in all wisdom and prudence.

So then he that comes to, and drinks of this water, glorifies God for his wisdom, praises God for his wisdom. Such a one saith, that God is only wise, and

* Rom. iv. 16. † Ephes. i. 7, 8. ‡ 2 Sam. xiv. 14.
Prov. viii. 11, 12.

lowing his head, faith again, to God only wise, be glory, both now and for ever, Amen.

But he that shall contemn this grace, confronts the highest wisdom, even wisdom upon the throne; he faith of himself, I am wiser than Daniel, than the judgment of God. I could have found out a more safe way to heaven myself, and had I been of God's council, I would have told him so. All this so horrible blasphemy, naturally proceeds from him that liketh not that grace should be king on the throne, and should proceed out of the throne to the world; "but shall he that contendeth with the Almighty, instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it?"†

The Text says, that this very doctrine to the Greeks, to the wise, is foolishness, and the preaching of it a foolish thing to them, but it will appear even then, when the conclusion of all things is come, and when these wise ones by their wisdom have fooled themselves to hell, that this foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God stronger than men.‡

Christ Jesus, because he was low in the world, is trampled upon by some, but he is a glorious throne at his Father's house: for since his humility was the lowest of all, now he is exalted to be the throne of God, yea, is made the fountain whence grace continually flows like the rivers, and comes down to us like a mighty stream. Wherefore, I will conclude this with both comfort and caution; with comfort and that because of the security that they are under that indeed have submitted to grace,—“sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the law but under grace. And let it be a caution to those that despise. Take heed, it is dangerous affronting of the

† John xlix. 2.

‡ 1 Cor. i. 21, 22, 23, 24, 25.

wisdom of God. Now here is the wisdom of God, even wisdom upon the throne. It pleased God, "for the glory of his wisdom," to make this the way; to wit, to set up grace to reign. I have often thought, and sometimes said, if God will be pleased with any way, surely he will be pleased with his own. Now this is the way of his own devising, the fruit and effect of his own wisdom: wherefore sinners please him, please him in that, wherein he is well pleased: "Come to the waters, cast thyself into them and fear not drowning; let God alone to cause them to carry thee into his paradise, that thou mayest see his throne."

Sixthly, the Throne is the seat of faithfulness, the place of performing of engagements and promises. "When I shall receive the congregation, saith Christ, I will judge uprightly,"* that is faithfully, and now he has received it, and is made head over all things to it; and for this cause is he upon the throne from whence proceeds all this grace, that like a river doth flow, and glide from heaven into the world. This river then is nothing else but the fulfilling of promises: "If I go not away, the comforter will not come; but if I depart I will send him unto you."† This is that which was spoken of by the prophet Joel, "And it shall come to pass in the last days (saith God) I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh," &c. Now this river is the spirit, the spirit and grace of God, which was promised by the Father and the Son, and now it comes running "from the throne of God and of the Lamb. For being now by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the spirit, he hath shed forth that which ye now see and hear."‡

* Psal. lxxv. 2. Ephes. xxii 23. † John xvi. 7.

‡ Acts ii. 16, 17, 18. chap. v. 33.

Behold then how mindful, how careful, how faithful our Father and the Lamb of God is! It is not exaltation, nor a crown, nor a kingdom, nor a throne, that shall make him neglect his poor ones on earth; Yea, therefore, even because he is exalted and on the throne, therefore it is that such a river with its golden streams, proceeds from the Throne to come unto us. And it shall proceed to be far higher than ever was the swellings of Jordan. True, it runs not so high now, as in former days, because of the curse of God upon Antichrist, by whose means the land of God's people is full of briars and thorns; * but when the tide is at the lowest, then it is nearest the rising; and this river will rise, and in a little time, be no more so low as but ankle deep; it will up to the knees, to the loins, † and be a broad river to swim in. "For there the glorious Lord shall be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams," ‡ and there shall be no more curse in the church, § but the Throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him, that is without molestation.

"These sayings are faithful and true," and in faithfulness shall they from the throne of God and of the Lamb, be performed to the church. Faithfulness in him that rules, is that which makes Sion rejoice; because thereby the promises yield milk and honey. For now the faithful God, that keepeth covenant performs to his church, that which he told her he would. Wherefore our rivers shall run, and our brooks yield honey and butter.

Let this teach all God's people to expect, to look, and wait for good things from the Throne. But oh, methinks, this throne, out of which good comes like a

* Isa. xii. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17. † Ezek. xlvii. ‡ Isa. xxxiii. 21. Rev. xxii. 3. 6. § Job xx. 17.

river ! who would not but be a subject to it ? who would not but worship before it ? But,

Seventhly, a Throne is " the seat of justice. Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy Throne.* And it is also from justice that this river of grace flows to us ; justice to Christ, and justice to those that are found in him, God declares that he can justly justify, justly forgive : now if he can justly justify and justly forgive ; † then can he give grace, and cause that it proceed to, yea, flow after us as a river. ‡ The river that gushed out of the rock in the wilderness ran after the people there, wherefore they wandered therein. They drank of the rock that followed them, the rock was not removed out of his place, but the flood followed them whither they went. § " He opened the rock and the waters gushed out, they ran in dry places like a river." ||

This rock, saith he, was Christ, that is, figuratively, and this Throne is Christ really, and the water gushing out of the rock, and the following of them in the wilderness was to shew how when Christ became a Throne, grace and goodness should follow us to the wilderness from thence so long as here we abide. Wherefore David considering this, said, " surely goodness and mercy shall FOLLOW me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever,"*

But when must this come ? The Text says from the Throne ; from the Throne, the seat of Justice ; for from thence, by reason of what HE hath found in Christ for us ; he in a way of righteousness and justice, lets out to us rivers of his pleasures ; whose original is

* Psal. lxxxix. 14. † Rom. iii. 24. ‡ 1 John i. 9.
§ 1 Cor. x. 3, 4. || Psal. cv. 41. * Psal. xxiii. 6.

that great and wide sea of mercy that flows in his infinite heart beyond thought.

All is paid for both US and grace.* We are bought with a price. He has obtained eternal redemption for us; yea, and as we are made his, and heaven made ours thus, so this river of grace has been also obtained by him for us. Wherefore all comes to us in a way of justice and righteousness. Hence we are said to obtain "faith through the righteousness of God;"† that is through the justice of God, and of Jesus our Lord. Mark here as the justice of God, and the justice of Jesus Christ our Lord: and we have our faith from the justice of God, because of the righteousness of Jesus Christ our Lord; that is, Jesus answered with works of justice the demands of justice; and therefore in a way of justice, grace reigns and comes to us like a river, as is signified, for that it is said to come to us out of the Throne.

Again, grace is said "to reign through righteousness unto eternal life."‡ Through what righteousness? the righteousness or justice of God by Jesus Christ our Lord. By Jesus Christ, or for his sake. For his sake have I said, we are forgiven; and for his sake have all things pertaining to life and Godliness. Which all things come to us, through, or down the stream of this river in a way of justice, and therefore it is said to come from the throne.

Eightly, this Throne is the seat of grace and mercy; and therefore it is called the mercy-seat and Throne of grace. This throne turns all into grace, all into mercy! This throne makes all things work together for good. It is said of Saul's sons, they were not buried after they were hanged, until water dropped

* 1 Cor. vi. 20. Heb. ix. 12. John vii. 39. † 2 Pet. i. 1. ‡ Rom. v. 21.

upon them out of heaven.* And it may be said of us, there is nothing suffered to come near us, until it is washed in that water that proceeds from the Throne of grace. Hence afflictions flow from grace; persecutions flow from grace; poverty, sickness, yea, death itself is now made ours by the grace of God through Christ.† O grace! O happy church of God! All things that happen to thee are for Christ's sake turned into grace. They talk of the Philosopher's stone and how, if one had it, it would turn all things into gold. Oh! but can it turn all things into grace? can it make all things work together for good? No, no, this quality, virtue, excellency, what shall I call it, nothing has in it, but the grace that reigns on the Throne of Grace; the river that proceeds from the Throne of God. Thus turns majesty, authority, the highest authority, glory, wisdom, faithfulness, justice, and all into grace. Here is a Throne! God let us see it. John had the honour to see, and the streams proceeding from it. O sweet sight! "He shewed me a pure river of water of life, proceeding out of the Throne of God."

Indeed, as was hinted before, in the days of the reign of Antichrist there are those visions of this Throne, nor of the river that proceedeth therefrom; now he holdeth back the face of his Throne; and spreadeth a cloud upon it: but the preserving, saving benefits thereof we have, as also have all the saints in the most cloudy and dark darks. And since we can see so little we must believe the more: and by believing give glory to God. We must also labour for more clear scripture knowledge of this throne; for the holy word of God is the perspective-glass, by which we may,

* 2 Sam. xxi. 10. 14. † Psal. cxix. 67. 7 Cor. iii. 22. Rev. iii. 19. Heb. xii. 5, 6, 7.

and the magnifying-glass that will cause us to behold with open face the glory of this Lord.*

But methinks I have yet said nothing of this Throne, which is indeed none other but the spotless, and glorified humanity of the Son of God. This Throne is the Lord Jesus, this grace comes from the divine majesty as dwelling bodily in the Lord Jesus. "Wherefore let us fall down before the Throne, and cast our crowns at the foot of the Throne, and give thanks to him that sits upon the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.

O how shou! Jesus be esteemed of! the throne of the king is a royal seat.† It is said of Solomon's there was not its like in ANY kingdom; but of this it may be said, there is not its like in heaven and earth. At the setting up of this Throne the angels flocked round about it, and the beasts and the elders gathered together to see it.‡ When this Throne was set in heaven, there was silence, all the heavenly host had no leisure to talk: they were surprised with sight and wonder. When this Throne was set in heaven, what talk there was, it was as the music of the trumpet.

"And behold," says John, "a door was opened in heaven; and the first that I heard, was as it were of a trumpet talking with me which said, come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit, and behold A Throne was set in heaven, and one sat upon the throne"

This Throne was Jesus Christ exalted, Set, that is lifted up, not as upon the cross, to the contempt and scorn of his person, but as I said to the wonderment of the four beasts, and the elders, and all the angels in

* 2 Cor. iii. 18.

† 1 Kings x. 20.

‡ Rev. iv. 1, 2,

3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

heaven. "A Throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the Throne;" that is God. And this intimates, his desirable rest forever; for to sit is to rest, and Christ is his rest for ever. Was it not therefore well worth the seeing? yea, if John had taken the pains to go up thither on his hands and knees; I say, to see the Lord Jesus as a throne, set in heaven, and the glory of God resting and abiding upon him, and giving out by him all things, not only his word, but all his dispensations and providences to the end of the world? and this blessed thing among the rest,—“even a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal.”

But I leave this, and proceed to the fourth thing;—namely, to the nature and quality of this water. It is said to be “pure and clear, pure and clear as crystal; and he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal.” I know that there is a two fold quality in a thing, one with respect to its nature, the other with respect to its operation. The first of these is inherent and remaineth in the subject being as such, and so for the most part useless.—The other is put forth then when it meeteth with fit matter on which it it may freely work. As to instance, *aqua vitæ*, the very metaphor here made use of, hath a quality inherent in it, but keep it stopt up in a bottle and then who will may faint notwithstanding; but apply it, apply it fitly, and to such as have need thereof, and then you may see its quality by the operation. This water or river of grace, is called, I say, *The water of life*, and so consequently, has a most blessed inherent quality, but its operation is seen by its working, the which it doth only then, when it is administered, and received for those ends for which it is administered. For then it revives where life is, and gives life where it is not. And thus far in the general have we spoken to it already. We will therefore in this place more par-

ticularly, though briefly, speak a few words unto it. First then, this water of life is the very ground-work of life in us. The ground-work of life for us, is the passion and merits of Christ, this is that for the sake of which grace is given unto us, as is intimated by the text: it proceeds from the Throne of God, who is Christ. Christ then having obtained grace for us, must needs be precedent as to his merit, to that grace he hath so obtained. Besides it is clear that the spirit and grace comes from God through him: therefore as to the communications of grace to us, it is the fruit of his merit and purchase. But I say, in us, grace is the ground work of life; for though we may be said to live virtually in the person of Christ before God; yet we are dead in ourselves, and so must be, until the spirit be poured upon us from on high; for the spirit is life and its graces are life, and when that is infused by God from the Throne, then we live and not till then. And hence it is called as before, living water, the water of life springing up in us everlasting life. The spirit then, and graces of this spirit, which is the river here spoken of, is that, and that only, which can cause us to live; that being life to the soul, as the soul is life to the body. All men therefore, as was said before, (*though elect, though purchased by the blood of Christ*) are dead, and must be dead, until the spirit of life from God and his Throne shall enter into them; until they shall drink it in by vehement thirst as the parched ground drinks in the rain.

Now when this living water is received, it takes up its seat in the heart, whence it spreads itself to the wakening of all the powers of the soul. For as in the first creation the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, in order to putting that creature into that excellent fashion and harmony which now we behold with our eyes; even so the new creation, to wit, the

making, us new to God, is done by the overspreading of the same spirit also. For the spirit, as I may so say, sitteth and broodeth upon the powers of the soul, as the hen doth on cold eggs, till they wax warm and receive life. The spirit then warmeth us, and bringeth the dead and benumbed soul *for so it is before conversion*) to a godly sense and understanding of states, of states both natural and spiritual: and this is the beginning of the work of the spirit by which the soul is made capable of understanding what God, and himself is.

And this drinking in of the spirit, is rather as the ground drinks in rain, than as a rational soul does through sense of the want thereof.

The spirit also garnisheth the soul with such things as are proper for it to the making of it live that life that by the word of God is called for.

It implanteth light, repentance, faith, love, desires after God, hope, sincerity, and what else is necessary for making a man a saint: these things I say, are the fruits and effects of this spirit, which as a river of water of life proceedeth forth of the Throne of God and of the Lamb.* Hence the spirit is called the spirit of faith, the spirit of love, and the spirit of a sound mind; for that the spirit, is the root and original of all these things by his operations in, and upon the face of the soul.

But again, as this living, water, this spirit and grace thereof, doth thus: so it also maintains these things once planted in the soul, by its continual waterings of them in the soul. Hence he saith; "I will water it every moment."† Water IT; his vineyard the

* 2 Cor. iv. 13. Gal. v. 22. 2 Tim. i. 7. † Isa.

xxvii. 1, 2, 3.

soul of the church, the graces of the church; and so the soul and graces of every godly man.

And because it so happeneth, sometimes, that some of these things wherewith the Holy Ghost has beautified the soul, may languish to a being, if not quite dead, yet ready to die: * therefore he doth not only refresh and water our souls but renew the face thereof, by either quickening to life that which remains, or by supplying of us with that which is new, to our godly perseverance and everlasting life. "Thus thou waterest the earth, and waterest it; thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God."†

For this must be remembered, that as the herb that is planted, or seed sown, needs watering with continual showers of the mountains; so our graces implanted in us by the spirit of grace, must also be watered by the rain of Heaven. "Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly, thou settest the furrow thereof, thou makest it soft with showers, thou blestest the springing thereof."‡ Hence he says that our graces shall grow. But how? "I will be as dew unto Israel, he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under his shadow return, they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine, the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon;"§ or as he saith in another place; "The Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in droughts, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters fail not."||

There is besides this, another blessing that comes to us by this living water, and that is the blessing of

* Rev. iii. 1, 2, 3. † Psal. lxxv. 9. ‡ Psal. lxxv. 10.
§ Hof. xiv. 5, 6, 7. || Isa. lviii. 11. Jer. xxxi. 12.

communion. All the warmth that we have in our communion it is the warmth of the spirit. When a company of saints are gathered together in the name of Christ to perform any spiritual exercise, and their souls be edified, warmed and made glad therein, it is because this water, this river of water of life, has in some of the streams thereof, ran into that assembly. Then are Christians like those that drink wine in bowls, merry and glad; for that they have drank into the spirit, and had their souls refreshed with the sweet gales, and strong wine thereof. This is the feast that Isaiah speaks of when he saith, "In this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all the people a feast of fat things, a feast of wine on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees, well refined.*" This is called in another place, "the communion of the Holy Ghost."† Now he warmeth spirits, uniteth spirits, revives, cherisheth, quickeneth, strengtheneth graces; renews assurances, brings old comforts to mind, weakens lust, imboldeneth and raiseth a spirit of faith, of love, of hope, of prayer, and makes the word a blessing, meditation a blessing, and duty very delightful to the soul. Without this water of life, communion is weak, flat, cold, dead, fruitless, lifeless; there is nothing seen, felt, heard, or understood in a spiritual and heart-quickenning way. Now ordinances are burdensome, sins strong, faith weak, hearts hard; and the faces of our souls dry, like the dry and parched ground.

This drink also revives us, when tempted, when sick, when persecuted, when in dark, and when we faint for thirst. The life of religion is this water of life; where that runs, where that is received, and where things are done in this spirit, there all things are well: the church thirsty, the soul thirsty, graces thirsty, and

* Isa. xxv. 6.

† 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

all is well. And this hint I thought convenient to be given of this precious water of life, that is with reference to the operative quality of it.

I shall come in the next place, to speak of it, as to the other descriptions which John doth give us of it.

He says it is,—“ 1. Pure.—2. Clear.—3. Clear to a comparison. And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal.”

First, you read here, that this water of life is PURE, that is, alone without mixture, for so sometimes the the word [PURE] is to be understood. As where is faith pure, pure olive oil;* pure frankincense; pure gold; pure blood of the grape, and the like: so then when he saith, “ he shewed me a pure river of water of life,” it is as if he had said, he shewed me a river of water that was all living, all life; and that had nothing in it but life. There was no death, or deadness, or flatness in it: or as he saith a little after, “ and there shall be no more curse. A pure river.” There is not so much as a grudge, or a piece of an upbraiding speech found therein. There is in it nothing but heart, nothing but love, nothing but grace, nothing but life. “ The gifts and calling of God are without repentance.”†

Secondly, [PURE] is sometimes set in opposition, to shew, or appearance; as where he says, “ The stars are not pure,‡ that is, not so without mixture of darkness, as they seem to be: so again, “ if thou wast pure and upright,”§ that is, as thou seemest to be, or as thou wouldest have us believe thou art.

Now take pure in this sense here, and then the meaning is, it is grace without deceit, without guile;

* Exod. xxvii. 20. chap. xxx. 34. chap. xxv. 11. 17.
Deut. xxxii. 14. † Rom. xi. ‡ Job xxv. 5.
§ Job viii. 8.

its shew, and its substance is the same; it has nothing but substance in it; it is indeed what it seems to be in bulk; its a river in shew, and a river indeed. It comes from God and from his Throne in appearance, and really it comes from his very heart.

The great fear of the tempted is, that there is not so much grace in God, and that he is not so free of it as some scriptures seem to import. But this word PURE is levelled against such objections and objectors, for the destroying of their doubts, and the relieving of their souls. There is no fraud, nor guile, nor fable in the business; for though God is pleased to present us with his grace under the notion of a river, it is not to delude our fancies thereby; but to give us some small illustration of the exceeding riches of his grace, which as far for quantity out strips the biggest rivers as the most mighty mountain doth the least ant's egg, or atom in the world.

Thirdly, but again this word (pure) is set in opposition to that which is hurtful and destructive. I am pure from the blood of all men;* that is, I have hurt nobody. The wisdom that is from above is first pure, it is not hurtful. Do you count them pure with the wicked balances? how can that be, since they are hurtful?

Now take (pure) in this sense here, and then it intimates that the grace of God, and the doctrine of grace, is not a hurtful thing. It is not as wine of an intoxicating nature.† If a man be filled with it, it will do him no harm. The best of the things that are in this world are some way hurtful, wine is hurtful, silver and gold are hurtful; but grace is not hurtful.‡ Never did man yet catch harm by the enjoyment and

* Acts xx. 26. Jam. iii. 17. Mich. vi. 11. † Eph. v. 8.

‡ Prov. xxv. 16, 17. chap. xx. 1. 1 Tim. vi. 10.

fulness of the grace of God. There is no fear of excess, or of surfeiting here. Grace makes no man proud, no man wanton, no man haughty, no man careless, or negligent as to his duty that is incumbent upon him, either from God or man: no, grace keeps a man low in his own eyes, humble, self-denying, penitent, watchful, savory, in good things, charitable; and makes him kindly affectionate to the brethren, pitiful and courteous to all men.

True, there are men in the world that abuse the grace of God, as some are said to "turn it into wantonness, and into lasciviousness."* But this is not because grace has any such tendency, or for that it worketh any such effect: but because such men are themselves empty of grace, and have only done, as death and hell hath done with wisdom, "heard the same thereof with their ears.† It is a dangerous thing for a man to have the notions of grace while his heart is void of the spirit and holy principles of grace; for such a man can do no other than abuse the grace of God. Alas, what can be expected of him that has nothing in him to teach him to manage that knowledge of grace which he has, but his flesh, his lusts, and lustful passions? can these teach him to manage his knowledge well? will they not rather put him upon all tricks, evasions, irreligious consequences and conclusions, such as will serve to cherish sin? what Judas did with Christ, that a graceless man will do with grace, even make it a stalking horse to his fleshly and vile designs; and rather than fail betray both it and the profession of it, to the greatest enemies it has in the world.

And here I may say, though grace is pure, and not hurtful at all; yet one altogether carnal, sinful, and graceless, having to do with the doctrine of it, by the

* Jude iv.

† Job xxviii. 22.

force of his lusts which tamper with it, he will unavoidably bring himself into the highest ruins thereby. An unwary man may destroy himself by the best of things, not because there is in such things, an aptness to destroy; but because of the abuse and misuse of them. Some know the way of Life,* the Water of Life, by knowledge that is naked and speculative only; and it had been better for such if they had not known than to know, and turn from what they know; than to know and make that knowledge subservient to their lusts. Some receive the rain of God, and the droppings of his clouds, because they continually sit under the means of his grace. But alas! they receive it as stones receive showers, or as dunghills receive rain: they either abide as hard stones still, or else return nothing to heaven for his mercy, but as the dunghills do, a company of stinking fumes. These are they that drink in the rain that comes often upon them, and that instead of bringing forth herbs meet for the dresser, bring forth briars and thorns: and these are they who are nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned.†

Fourthly, by this word (pure) I understand sometimes the chiefest good, the highest good. There are many things that may be called good, but none of them are good, as grace is good.‡ All things indeed are pure, that is, all creatures in themselves are good and serviceable to man, but they are not so good as grace. There is a generation that are pure, that are good in their own eyes.§ There are good men, good consciences, good works, good days, good angels, &c. but none so good as grace, for it is grace that has made them so. Grace, this water of life, therefore is good, superlatively good, good in the highest degree; for

* 2 Pet. ii. 20, 21, 22. † Heb. vi. 7, 8. ‡ Rom. xiv. 20. Gen. i. 31. § Prov. xxx. 12,

that it makes all things good; and preserveth them good. And whatever it be that this water of life washeth not, it is evil and given to the curse, as the Prophet intimates where he saith, "But the miry places thereof, and the marshes thereof, shall not be healed, they shall be given to salt.*

But who understands this, who believes it? its goodness is kept close from the fowls of the air. Men, most men are ignorant of the goodness of it, nor do they care to enquire after the enjoyment of this pure, this good water of life. The reason is, because though it is good in itself, good in the highest degree, and that which makes all things good: yet it is not such a good as is suited to a carnal appetite. There is good; and there is suitable good: now suitable good is of two sorts; either such as is spiritual, or such as is temporal. That which is spiritual, is desired only of them that are spiritual; for temporal good will satisfy a carnal mind. Now grace is a spiritual good; this river of grace is the goodness of spiritual good. It is the original life of all the grace in our souls: no marvel then, if it be so little set by those that are carnally minded. Hay will serve a horse, and mire will serve a sow; so things of this life suit best with the men of this world, for their appetite is gross and carnal, that favour not the things that be of the spirit of God. "The natural man receiveth not the things that be of the spirit of God;" (the things that be of this river of God) "for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.† This is a river of oil which the prophet speaks of, the river of spirit. Were it a river of gold and silver, there would be odd fishing on the banks thereof. But it is a river "that runs like oil, saith the Lord God.‡

* Ezek. lxxviii. 11. † 1 Cor. ii. 14. ‡ Ezek. xxxii. 14.

This rock pours us out rivers of oil, fresh oil, soft oil, sweet oil, the oil of joy, the oil of gladness, oil to anoint the head withal, oil to make the face to shine, oil by which thou wilt be made able to honour both God and man in some good measure as becometh thee.*

I might have enlarged upon this head, and have shewed you many more particulars wherein this term of (pure) might serve for the better setting forth of the excellency of this water of life, but I shall proceed no farther upon this, but will come to that which remains.

Secondly, as this river of water of life is said to be pure, so it is said to be (clear). "He shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear". This term has also its peculiar signification, and therefore ought be heeded.

1. (Clear) is set in opposition to dark, therefore some are said to be clear as the sun. And again, "the light shall not be clear nor dark."† In both these places (clear) is to be taken for light, day-light, sun-light; for indeed it is never day, nor sun-shine with the soul, until, the streams of this river of life come gliding to our doors, into our houses, into our hearts. Hence the beginning of conversion is called illumination: yea, the coming of this river of water of life unto us is called the day-spring from on high, through the tender mercy of our God.‡ It is also called the dawning of the day.§ And hence again, these men into whom this river of water of life comes not, are said "to be dark, darkness. Ye were sometimes darkness, but now ye are light in the Lord."|| Where-

* Job xxix. 6. Psal. xcii. 10. Psal. lv. 21. Isa. lxi. 4. Psal. xlv. 7. Eccl. ix. 8. Psal. civ. 15. Judg. ix. 11. † Song. vi. 10. Zek. xiv. 6. ‡ Heb. x. 32. § Luke i. 78. || 2 Pet. i. 19. Eph v. 8.

fore this water is like Jonathan's honey, it hath a faculty to open the eyes, to make them that sit in darkness see a great light.* The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.† “God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light” (the spirit that enlighteneth and giveth the light) “of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” This river casteth beams where it goes, like the beams of the sun; it shines, it casts out rays of glory unto those that drink thereof. The streams of this grace were they that overtook Saul when he was going to Damascus, they were the waters of this flood that compassed him round about.‡ And if you will believe him, he saith this light from Heaven was a great light, a light above the brightness of the sun, a light that did by the glory of it, make dark to him all the things in the world.

2. Clear] is set in opposition “to that which is not pleasing.” For to be (clear) is to be pleasant. “Hence it is said truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun.§ I read of rivers that looked red as blood, that stank like the blood of a dead man:|| but this is no such river. I read of rivers whose streams are like streams of brimstone, fiery streams, streams of burning pitch:* but this is none of them. There is a river besides all these, “clear and pleasant, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God.”†

There are waters that doves love to sit by, because by the clearness of their streams, they can see their pretty selves as in a glass.‡

* 1 Sam. xiv. 27. Mal. iv. 16. † 2 Cor. iv. 6. ‡ Acts ix. 3. chap. xxvi. 13. § Eccl. xi. 7. || 2 Kings iii. 22, 23. * Isa. xxx. † Dan. vii. 13. Isa. xxxiv. 9. Psal. xlvj. 4. ‡ Song v. 12.

These be the streams where doves wash their eyes, and by which they solace themselves, and take great content. These streams are instead (as I said) of a looking glass; their clearness presents us with an opportunity of seeing our own features. As in fair waters, a man may see the body of the sun, and of the moon, and of the stars, and the very body of Heaven; so he that stands upon the bank of this river, and that washeth his eyes with this water, may see the Son of God, the stars of God, the glory of God, and the habitation that God has prepared for his people. And are not these pleasant sights? Is not this excellent water? Has not this river pleasant streams?

3. Clear] is set in opposition to dirty water and muddiness. I read of some waters that are fouled with the feet of beasts, and with the feet of men, yea, and deep waters too. Yea, saith God to some, ye have drunken of the deep waters, "and have fouled the residue with your feet," and again, "as for my flock they eat that which ye have trodden with your feet, and they drink that which ye have fouled with your feet.*" These waters are doctrines contained in the text, muddled and dirtied by the false glosses and fluttish opinions of erroneous judgments; of which the poor sheep have been made to drink. And verily this is apparent enough, by the very colour and hue of those poor souls: for though the truth of God was in them, yet the very stain of tradition and superstition might be also seen in their scales. For as the fish of the river receive, by being there, the changeable colours of the waters, so professors what doctrine they hear and drink, do look like that. If their doctrines are muddy, their notions are muddy; if their doctrines are bloody, their notions and tempers are bloody: but if

* Ezek. xxxiv. 18, 19.

their doctrines are clear, so are their notions, for their doctrines has given them a clear understanding of things.

Now here we have a river of water of life, that is clear, clear without dirt, and mud. Clear without the human inventions and muddy conceptions of un sanctified, and uninstructed judgments; yea, here you have a river, the streams whereof lie open to all in the church, so that they need not those instruments of conveyance that are foul, and that use to make water stink, if they receive it to bring it to them that have need.

4. By [clear] we sometimes understand purgation; or that a thing has purged itself, or is purged from those soils, and imputations of evil wherewith sometimes they have been charged. "Then shalt thou be clear from this thy oath, or how shall we clear ourselves.* Something of this sense may be in the text, for if men are not afraid, to charge God with folly, which is intimated by, "that thou mightest be clear when thou art judged,"† will they think you, be afraid to impute evil to his word, and grace, and spirit? no verily; they are bold enough at this work. Nay, more than this, even from the foundation of the world, men have cast slanders upon, and imputed base things unto the blessed grace of the gospel. But not to look so far back, Paul was one of the pipes through which God conveyed this grace to the world: and what was he counted for his so doing, but "a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition throughout the whole world.‡

But behold no imputation can stick on the grace of God, not stick long, for that, like honey, will purge itself of what filth is put into it. And of all bad imputations of evil men. Springs and rivers are of a self

* Gen. xxiv. 8. chap. xlv. 16.

† Psal. li. 4.

‡ Acts xxiv. 5, 6.

purging quality : now here we have to do with a river, a river of water of life: but a river more slandered than ever did Naaman the Syrian slander the waters of Israel, in preferring those of Abana, and Pharpar rivers of Damascus beyond them.* But behold, now at last, when all the world have done what they can, and have cast what reproaches and slanders upon it they are able, it is a river pure and clear. It has purged itself before kings, it has purged itself before princes and judges, and all the Naamans in the world. It is still a river, a river, a river of water of life, a river of water of life, clear.

5. By [clear] we sometimes understand purity manifest, or innocence and goodness made known. "In all things you have approved yourselves to be clear of this matter.† That is, you have made it appear, and stand upon your justification, and are willing to be searched and sounded to the bottom by those who have a desire to undertake that work. So this river of water of life in the fountain and in the streams thereof, offer themselves to the consideration and conscience of all men. To this end, how often doth God, the head of this river, and he out of whose throne it proceeds, call upon men to challenge him if they can, with any evil or misdoing towards them, either by "presence or doctrine;" hence he says, "put me in remembrance, let us plead together, declare thou, (if thou canst) that thou mayest be justified* and I condemned." So again, "what iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain."† So Christ, "which of you convinceth me of sin. And if I have spoken evil, bear-witness of the evil." So Paul, "we have re-

* 2 Kings x. 11, 12. † 2 Cor. vii. 11. ‡ Isa. xliii. 26.
§ Jer. ii. 5. John viii. 46. chap. xviii. 23.

nounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, not handling the word of God deceitfully; but by the manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."† All these sentences are chiefly to be applied to the doctrine, and so are, as it were, an offer to any, if they can, to find a speck or a spot, or a wrinkle, or any such thing in this river of water of life.

Some men fly from it, as from a bear; and some are afraid to drink of it for fear it should be poison unto them. Some again, dare not take it, because it is not mixed, and as they, poor souls, imagine, qualified, and made toothsome by a little of that which is called the wisdom of this world. Thus one shucks, another shrinks, and another will none of God. Mean while, who shall so please to look into this river, shall find it harmless and clear. Yea, offering itself to the consciences of all men to make trial, if it be not the only chief good, the only necessary waters, the only profitable for the health of the soul, of all the things that are in the world, and as clear of mischief as is the sun of spots.

Thirdly, As John saw this river pure and clear, so he saw it clear to a comparison. Clear to the best of comparisons, clear as crystal. Crystal is a very clear stone, as clear as the clearest glass, if not clearer; one may see far into it, yea through it, it is without those spots, and streaks, and smirches that are in other precious stones. Wherefore when he saith, that this river is clear as crystal: it is as if God should say, look sinners, look to the bottom of these my crystal streams. I have heard of some seas that are so pure and clear, that a man may see to the bottom though they may be forty foot deep. I know this river of water of life, is a deep river: but though it is said to be deep, it is

not said we can see no bottom. Indeed as to the wideness of it, it is said to be such as that it cannot be passed over: but I say, it is no where said that we cannot see to the bottom: nay the comparison implies, that a man with good eyes may see to the bottom. It is clear, as clear as crystal. So then we will a little look down to the bottom, and see through these crystal streams, what's at the bottom of all.

First, then, the bottom of all is, "that we might be saved." "These things I say," saith Christ "that you might be saved," and again, "I am come that you might have life, and that you might have it more abundantly."* This is the bottom of this great river of water of life, and of its proceeding from the Throne of God and of the Lamb: it is that we might be saved: it is that we might live. What a good bottom is here! what a sound bottom is here! But few deep rivers have a good bottom. Mud is at the bottom of most waters in the world, even the sea itself, when it worketh, cast up mire and dirt, and so do the hearts of sinners: but the bottom of this grace of God, and of the spirit, and the word thereof, is that we might be saved, consequently a very good bottom.

Secondly, as the bottom of all is, "that we may be saved;" so that we may be saved by grace, and this is the bottom sounder and sounder. Our salvation might have been laid upon a more difficult bottom than this. It might have been laid on our works. God might have laid it there, and have been just, or he might have left us to have laid it where we would, and then to be sure we had laid it there, and so had made but a muddy bottom to have gone upon to life. But now, this river of water of life, it has a better bottom: (the water of life is clear as crystal, look down to the bot-

* John v. 34. chap. x. 10.

tom and see) we are justified freely by his grace.*
 "By grace ye are saved;" there is the bottom. Now grace as I have shewed you, is a firm bottom to stand on, it is of grace that might be sure. Surely David was not here, or surely this was not the river that he spake of, when he said, "I sink in deep waters where there is no standing, I am come into waters where the floods overflow me; deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink."† I say, to be sure this could not be the river: no, David had now straggled out of the way, and was tumbled into some pit, or into some muddy and dirty hole: but as for this river it has a good bottom: a bottom of salvation by grace, and a man need not cry out when he is here, that he sinks, or that he is in danger of being drowned in the dirt or mire.

Thirdly, the bottom of all is, as I said, that we might be saved by grace, and I will add, "through the redemption that is in Christ." This is still better and better. We read that when Israel came over Jordan, the feet of the Priests that did bear the ark, stood on firm ground in the bottom, and that they set up great stones for a memorial thereof.‡ But had Jordan so good a bottom, as has this most blessed river of water of life, or were the stones that Israel took out thence, like this tried stone, this sure foundation! § O the Throne! this river comes out of the Throne, and we are saved by grace through the redemption that is in him. || We read that there is a city that has foundations, grace is one, Christ another, and the truth of all the prophets and the apostles, as to their true doctrine, another, &c. and again, all these are the very bottom of this goodly river of the water of life.*

* Rom. iii. 24. Eph. ii. 5. 8. † Rom. iv. 16.
 Psal. lxxix. 2, 14. ‡ Joh. ii. 17. chap. iii. 1, 2, 3.
 § Isa. xxviii. 16. || Heb. xi. 10. * Ephes. ii. 19, 20.

Fourthly, there is another thing to be seen at the bottom of this holy river, and that is, "the glory of God:" we are saved, saved by grace, saved by grace through the redemption that is in Christ, to the praise and glory of God. And what a good bottom is here. Grace will not fail, Christ has been sufficiently tried, and God will not lose his glory; therefore they that drink of this river shall doubtless be saved, to wit, they that drink of it with the spiritual appetite to it: and thus much for the explication of the text.

U S E.

I come now to make some Use of the whole.

YOU know our discourse has been at this time of “the water of life, of its quantity, head spring, and quality;” and I have shewed you that its nature is excellent, its quantity abundant, its head-spring glorious, and its quality singularly good.

First, let this then in the first place, be a provocation to us to be more free in making use of this water. There are many now a-days that are for inventing of waters, to drink for the health of the body; and to allure those that are ill, to buy; they will praise their waters beyond their worth. Yea, and if they be helpful to one person in a hundred, they make as if they could cure every one. Well here you have the great physician himself with his water, and he calls it the water of life, water of life for the soul; this water is *probatum est*. It has been proved times without number: it never fails, but where it is not taken. No disease comes amiss to it, it cures blindness, deadness, deafness, dumbness. “It makes the lips of them that are asleep to speak.”* This is the right holy water (all others

* Acts xxvi. 18. Isa. v. 4, 5. Song vii. 9.

is counterfeit) it will drive away devils and spirits, it will cure enchantments, and witchcrafts, it will heal the mad and lunatic; it will cure the most desperate melancholy; it will dissolve doubts and mistrusts, though they are grown as hard as a stone in the heart * It will make you speak well, it will make you have a white soul, and that is better than to have a white skin. It will make you taste well, it will make you dislike all hurtful meats; it will beget in you a good appetite to that which is good; † it will remove obstructions in the stomach and liver; it will cause that you receive of God's bread, shall turn to nourishment and make good blood. In a word, it preserveth life: they that take this water shall live longer than did old Methusalem, and that he lived a great while. ‡

Wherefore let me continue my exhortation to you, "be more free in making use of this water." § It is the wholesomest water in the world, you may take it; you may take it at the third, sixth, ninth, or eleventh hour, but to taste it in the morning of your age is best, || for then diseases have not gotten so great a head as when they are of long continuance: consequently they will be removed with far more ease: besides those that thus do, will receive endless life and the comfort of it betimes; and that you know is a double life to one.

This water gently purges; and yet more effectually than any others. True, where bad humours are more tough and churlish, it will shew itself stronger of operation, for their is no disease can be too hard for it. It will as we say, throw the house out of the windows, but will rid us of the plague of those most deadly infections

* Gal. iii. 1, 2, 3. Mark xvi. 17, 18. Ezek. xxxvi. 26. Col. iv. 6. Ezek. xxxvi. 25. † Isa. xxx. 22. ‡ Gen. v. 27. § Matt. xx. 3, 4, 5, 6. || Eccl. xi. 1, 2, 3, 4.

that otherwise will be sure to make sleep in death, and bring us with the multitude down to hell. But it will do us no hurt, it only breaks our sleep in security, and brings us to a more quick apprehension of the plague of our heart and flesh. It will, as I said before, provoke to appetite, but make us long after that which is wholesome. (If any ask why I thus allegorize, I answer, the text doth lead me to it.)

Secondly, I advise therefore in the next place that thou get thee a dwelling place by these waters, "the beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him, and the Lord shall cover him all the day long.* If thou ask, where that dwelling is? I answer, in the city of God; in, and among the tabernacles of the Most High. This river comes from the throne, to water the city of God; and to that end it is said, "to run in the midst of the street of it."† If ye will enquire, return, come. The seed also of his servants shall inherit it, "and they that love his name shall dwell therein."‡ Get thee a dwelling in Jerusalem, in the midst of Jerusalem, and then thou wilt be seated by this river.

In old times the ancients had their habitations by the rivers; yea, we read of Aroer that stood upon the brink of the river Arnon.§ Balaam had also his dwelling in his city Pethor, "by the river of the land of the children of his people." Oh, by a river side is the pleasantest dwelling in the world, and of all rivers, the river of the water of life is the best. "They that dwell there, shall not hunger nor thirst, neither shall the heat nor sun smite them, for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water

* Deut. xxxiii. 12. † Rev. xxii. 2. ‡ Psal. lxxix. 34, 35, 36. § Josh. xii. 9.

shall he guide them."* Trees planted by the rivers, and that spread out their roots, they bring forth their fruit in their season. And the promise is that men that take up their dwellings by this river of water of life, shall be fruitful as such trees.

If thou be'st a Christian, thou hast more than an ordinary call, and occasion to abide by these waters, thy things will not grow but by these waters. Weeds, and the excellencies of most men, we may find in the barren wilderness, they grow under every hedge; but thine are garden, and so choice things, and will not thrive without much water of God's river: dwell therefore here that thy soul may be as a watered garden.† And when thou seest how those that are loth to die, make provision at Tunbridge, Epsom, the Bath, and other places, and what houses they get that they may have their dwellings by those waters, then do thou consider of thy spiritual disease, and how nothing can cure thee but this blessed water of life: be also much of desires to have a dwelling place in Jerusalem, that thou mayest always be nigh to these waters. Be often also in watering thy plants with these waters. I mean the blessed graces of God in thy soul, then shalt thou grow and retain thy greenness, and prove thyself to be a disciple indeed. And herein is God, and thy Father glorified, that thou bear much fruit.‡

Thirdly, my third word is, bless God for providing for man such waters. These only can make us live; all others come out of the dead sea, and do kill: there is no living water but this. I say, shew thy acceptance of it with thanksgiving; if we are not to receive our bread and cheese, but with thanksgiving,§ how

* Ma. xlix. 10. Psal. i. 3. Jer. xvii. 8. † Jer. xxxi. 12. Isa. xxii. 1, 2, 3. ‡ John xiii. 8. § 2 Cor. ix. 14. 15.

should we bless God for this unspeakable gift. This is soul life, life against sin; life from sin; life against the curse, life beyond hell, beyond desert, beyond thought, beyond desires. Life that is pleasing, life that is profitable, life everlasting. Oh my brethren, bless God! who doth good, and gives us such rain, filling our hearts with food and gladness. When Moses would take the heart of Israel, and took in hand to raise up their spirits to thankfulness, he used to tell them that the land that they were to go to, was a land that God cared for, and that was watered with the dew of Heaven. Yea, "a land of brooks of water, of fountains and deeps that spring out of the valleys and hills: a land that flowed with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands."* But yet in his description he makes no mention of a river of water of life: a river the streams whereof make glad the city of God.

This river is the running out of God's heart, the letting out his very bowels, for God is the living God. This is his heart and soul. "Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly, with my whole heart, and with my whole soul."† I say, if ever God's heart and soul appeared, it shewed itself in giving this water of life: and the throne from whence it proceeds. Wherefore all the reason of the world that in the reception of it, thy heart and soul should run out and flow after him in thanksgiving. See how David words it in the hundred and third psalm, all the five first verses, and do likewise.

Fourthly, by the characters that are given of this water of life, thou art capacitated to judge, when a notion, a doctrine, an opinion comes to thine ears, whether it is right, good and wholesome, or how. This river is pure, is clear, is pure and clear as crystal. Is the

* Deut. viii. 6, 7, 8. Exod. iii. 8. chap xiii. 15. Lev. xx. 24. Numb. xiv. 8. † Jer. xxii. 41.

doctrine offered unto thee so? or is it muddy and mixed with the doctrines of men? look man and see if the foot of the worshippers of Bell be not there; and if the waters be not fouled thereby. What water is fouled, is not the water of life, or at least not the water of life in its clearness. Wherefore, if thou findest it not right, go up higher to the spring-head, for always the nearer to the spring, the more pure and clear is the water. Fetch then thy doctrine from afar, if thou canst not have it good nearer hand.* Thy life lies at stake, the counterfeit of this is dangerous, is most destructive, wherefore take heed how you hear, what you hear: for, as I said before of the fish, by your colour it will be seen what waters you swim in; wherefore look you well to yourselves.

Fifthly, doth this water of life run like a river? like a broad, full, and deep river; then let no man, be his transgressions never so many, fear at all, but there is enough to save his soul, and to spare. Nothing has been more common to many, than to doubt of the grace of God; a thing the most unbecoming a sinner of any thing in the world. To break the law is fact foul enough; but to question the sufficiency of the grace of God to save therefrom, is worse than sin, if worse can be. Wherefore despairing soul, for it is to thee I speak, forbear thy mistrusts, cast off thy slavish fears, hang thy misgivings as to this upon the hedge; and believe, thou hast an invitation sufficient thereto, a river is before thy face. And as for the want of goodness and works; let that by no means daunt thee, this is a river of water of life; streams of grace and mercy. There is as I said enough therein to help thee, for grace brings all that is wanting to the soul. Thou therefore hast nothing to do, I mean as to the curing of thy

* Job xxxvi. 3.

soul of its doubts and fears, and despairing thoughts, but to drink and live for ever.

Sixthly, but what is all this to the dead world? to them that love to be dead? they toss their vanities about as the boys toss their shuttle cocks in the air, till their foot slips, and themselves descend into the pit.

James

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